



**From the Desk of Dr. Mark Rollefson**

*Superintendent of the Yorkville Joint #2 School District*

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## **School Referendum**

### *Yorkville School Board Referendum on April 2023 Ballot*

On Monday evening, January 16, 2023, the Yorkville School Board of Education voted unanimously to place two referendum questions on the ballot for the Tuesday, April 4, 2023 election. The Board is asking community members to voice their opinions and vote.

From now through April 3, the District will provide as many opportunities as possible to understand the rationale behind this decision, the impact on property taxes, maintenance items, and operations affected. Stay tuned for more communications, as well as opportunities for questions and answers.

If you are just jumping in now and this topic is peaking your interest, you are encouraged to read six of the Constant Contact newsletter articles sent out over the past twelve months leading up to this decision.

1. [Facility Study Results - December 14, 2022](#)
2. [The Mill Rate Went Down - November 18, 2022](#)
3. [Molybdenum in Our Drinking Water - November 1, 2022](#)
4. [Aging Infrastructure \(Larger Maintenance Items\) - October 13, 2022](#)
5. [Open Enrollment Impact on Yorkville - September 7, 2022](#)
6. [Accountability, Mill Rate and Defeasance - January 25, 2022](#)

**There are two questions on the April 4, 2023 ballot.** The first question is asking voters to consider up to \$12.1 million for maintenance. The actual question on the ballot will read as follows:

***BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of the Yorkville Joint No. 2 School District, Racine County, Wisconsin that there shall be issued pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$12,100,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of a school facility improvement project consisting of: renovations, building infrastructure, capital maintenance and site improvements at district facilities; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment.***

A Bond Referendum (a.k.a. Construction Referendum or Capital Referendum) such as this one asks voters to approve the District issuing debt to pay for major building projects such as maintenance, remodeling, or additions to school buildings or grounds. Much like a home mortgage, a Bond Referendum is typically financed over

an extended period of time, often 20 years.

For example, the Yorkville Bond Referendum of 2006, which added the new wing, (gym, music rooms, library, cafeteria, art room, special education room, and office) was a twenty year bond. Wise budgetary decisions in the past few years will allow Yorkville to pay this bond off this coming March 2023 - which is 3 years early!

The breakdown of the Bond Referendum is as follows:

**Mechanical Systems:** HVAC and mechanical updates, add air conditioning to existing classrooms, install Molybdenum filtration system and supply to new electric water coolers and kitchen, and 1965 sanitary sewer replacement.

**Electrical and Technology Systems:** LED lighting upgrade throughout the building and exterior with an estimated return on investment to significantly decrease utility costs, electrical power system upgrades, keyless entry and camera upgrades to improve upon safety and security, fire alarm system upgrades, IT/data/phone and PA system upgrades.

**Exterior Maintenance:** Single-pane window replacements with energy efficient windows, building envelope repairs including tuck pointing, fixing cracking, and upgrade of sealants.

**Interior Maintenance:** Aging flooring including asbestos abatement, ceiling, door, and casework replacements, 2007 gym floor refinishing, bathroom remodel to meet needs of current students, ADA ramp installation.

**Educational Adequacy & Site Improvements:** Car pick up/drop off loop revisions, traffic flow and parking improvements, surface and stormwater drainage improvements, special education spaces (remodel existing), maintenance centralized storage and receiving addition.

Grand total NEXUS solutions identified nearly \$22 million in current and future needs. However, this number was quickly and significantly reduced to \$12.1 million. Several items such as roofing do not need immediate attention, but will remain on the District's radar for long term planning.

The categories explained in general terms above are broken down with costs as follows:

Category	Dollar Impact
Mechanical Systems	\$3,771,100
Electrical and Technology Systems	\$1,322,400
Exterior Maintenance	\$866,700
Site & Parking Lots	\$1,680,800
Interior Maintenance	\$1,580,500
Educational Adequacy & Site Updates	\$2,899,800

The second question on the April 4, 2023 ballot is that of an Operations Referendum. An Operations Referendum asks voters to approve additional funding above the annual revenue limit to maintain things like class sizes, programs, and student services. Funds secured are used within the year they are received. The actual question on the ballot will read as follows:

***BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of the Yorkville Joint No. 2 School District, Racine County, Wisconsin that the revenues included in the School District budget be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$900,000 beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, for recurring purposes consisting of operational and maintenance expenses.***

Starting about 20 years ago, Operations Referendums to exceed the revenue limit have become very common in Wisconsin. About 30 years ago, the State of WI placed revenue limits on school districts, capping how much the District could increase property taxes for school operating expenditures. This placed the responsibility of the District to (a) become more fiscally responsible and (b) provided for more local control in decision making.

In other words, if the District deems it necessary to exceed the revenue limit, the District must ask the local taxpayers to vote on it. In the distant past, it was just imposed.

In Yorkville, we benefit from small class sizes (student to teacher ratio), recruitment and retention of teachers, assuring we pay off our bills such as transportation and utilities, and offer opportunities above and beyond what is required of the State. Spanish classes for K-8 grade students is one example of academic opportunity above and beyond what is mandated. With a failed operations referendum, each of these areas will be significantly impacted.

#### **Property Tax Impact**

Approval of Question 1, Bond Referendum, would result in an annual estimated tax increase of \$22, or \$1.83 per month, on a property value of \$100,000.

Approval of Question 2, Operations Referendum, would result in an annual estimated tax increase of \$30, or \$2.50 per month, on a property value of \$100,000.

The Board and Administration have timed these referendum questions and the related tax impacts to coincide with the following two factors to minimize tax impact:

1. The current operations referendum Yorkville School is benefiting from (passed by voters in 2018) reaches its sunset June 30, 2023.
2. The current Bond Referendum passed by voters in 2006 to build the new wing (gym, music rooms, library, cafeteria, art room, special education room, and office) will be retired as of March, 2023.

There will be several communications forthcoming on this topic. Also, please utilize our [website](#) with continued updates on the referendum, the facility and grounds study, tax impact, and other related information.

If you have any questions or comments, it is beneficial to me to hear from you. My email address is [mark.rollefson@yorkville.k12.wi.us](mailto:mark.rollefson@yorkville.k12.wi.us).



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